



Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children

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Indiana Early Childhood Professional Development

***“Quality of care in early childhood settings depends
on the education and training of the teachers.”***

Kontos, Howes, & Galinsky (1997)

***“Teacher sensitivity and involvement with children
are affected by specialized training in child development.”***

Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips (1989)

Looking into the eyes of a young Hoosier child, we wish them limitless joy, limitless opportunities, and limitless achievements. In Indiana, like all other states, it takes a system – not just an array of programs/services, to develop every child’s full potential.

Teachers and other early childhood professionals have a unique place in this system. As researchers describe how early childhood education can best effect positive outcomes for children from birth through age 8 (Peisner-Feinberg et al. 2000; National Research Council 2001), one finding stands out: *Teachers are key*. Curriculum, teaching strategies, assessment, comprehensive services, public policies – are all important. But it is through caring, committed, and competent early childhood professionals that young children and their families experience the excellent curriculum, the appropriate teaching strategies, the thoughtful assessment practices, the supportive services, and the effective public policies.

I. Indiana Early Care and Education Professional Development System Overview

A. Vocational Education – Early Childhood Development Programs

Over 3,500 high school students are currently enrolled in 75 different high school/area vocational school early childhood development programs throughout Indiana. Many of the high school early childhood programs currently have articulation agreements with the community colleges and many do not. (DOE, Vocational Education, 2004)

B. Informal Professional Development at the Community Level

The Indiana Association for Child Care Resource and Referral, Indiana Early Childhood Center, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community - IU, Head Start Programs, Purdue Cooperative Extension, and many other local agencies and organizations provide workshops and seminars for early care and education professionals.

C. Indiana Non Formal Child Development Associate (CDA) Project

Over 600 early care and education professionals have the opportunity to complete the Child Development Associate Credential by completing 120 hours of training with a local early care and education training agencies in their community. The CDA is a national competency based credential awarded by the National Council for Professional Recognition out of Washington, D.C.

D. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® INDIANA

Since 1999, the T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® INDIANA project has benefited over 82,795 children from over 4,987 early childhood providers completing over 33,204 credit hours, working in 2,295 different early childhood settings in 92 counties through T.E.A.C.H. scholarships. (See detailed handout)

E. Indiana Higher Education Institutions

Seven 4-year public higher education institutions currently offer degrees in early childhood development. As of 2001, all 14 Ivy Tech Community Colleges offer the CDA classes and the Associates in Early Childhood. Eight 4-year independent colleges currently offer degrees in early childhood education.

Early care and education professionals have worked hard to put in place seven articulation agreements between the 2-year and 4-year institutions in the early childhood/family and consumer science areas.

II. Building on the Early Childhood Professional Development Foundation

A. Consistent teacher licensure in early childhood education

In 1991, National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Association for Teacher Educators issued a position statement urging every state to have a uniform and distinctive birth –age 8 license for early childhood professionals (ATE & NAEYC 1991).

Indiana needs to make sure we are meeting or exceeding this recommendation.

B. Policies to support articulation

Many people encounter barriers when they try to transfer early childhood education –related credits from community colleges to four-year institutions, or when they attempt to receive college credit for extensive training that has taken place outside the higher education system.

Indiana must continue to break down the barriers and make accessible to every early care and education professionals the opportunity to continue to increase their skills and knowledge and move through the education systems.

C. *Policies to increase the cultural and linguistic diversity of early childhood professionals.*

Indiana early care and education surveys reinforce the obvious: the current early childhood workforce – predominantly white and non-Hispanic – does not reflect the racial, ethnic, and linguistic characteristics of Indiana's young children and families.

We must work to open the early care and education professional development doors for diverse providers.

D. *Policies to support and reward early childhood educators for achieving higher levels of education and specialized training.*

People often begin working in early childhood without specialized training and without a high level of formal education. Many have the ability and commitment to move forward in higher education and to gain licensure or other credentials. However, policies and resources to support these future leaders are often lacking.

We must continue to support the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® INDIANA project and other professional development initiatives currently in the State and expand those opportunities as we see the needs with the State.

Submitted By: Dianna Wallace, Indiana AEYC Executive Director
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